

CRITERIA FOR POST-WAR INFRASTRUCTURE RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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by

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Post-conflict infrastructure reconstruction can consume billions of dollars and require years of commitment if strategic objectives are to be met in a lasting way. The United States has a mixed record of both success and failure in its history of post-conflict infrastructure reconstruction since World War II. Analysis of this fairly-recent history reveals a set of six criteria that can be used by planners and decision makers as they evaluate conditions on the ground to determine feasibility and the chances of success in a particular endeavor. These six criteria are: presence of a functioning government and government capacity, pre-war level of development, level of wartime destruction and type of destruction, local construction capability and capacity, security, and the human dimension. Of these six, a functioning government and security are primary – without these two, reconstruction eventually ends in failure. The remaining four are strong enablers to a successful reconstruction process. These criteria can also be used to articulate – to the host nation’s people and government, to domestic and international audiences – clear expectations for actions required by each target audience to achieve success.

CRITERIA FOR POST-WAR INFRASTRUCTURE RECONSTRUCTION EFFORT

. . . If war, as Clausewitz said, is an extension of politics by other means, so too is relief and reconstruction an extension of political, economic, and military strategy.

—Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction¹

Since the end of World War II, the United States and its allies have poured billions of dollars into post-conflict reconstruction with inconsistent results. Infrastructure reconstruction is perhaps the most costly and time consuming element of any conflict resolution, so special attention must be given to its planning and execution. Success in post-war Japan and successful execution of the Marshall Plan in Europe have given American policy makers confidence that post-war rebuilding efforts can be successful, enabling a targeted country to return to normalcy or transform its government and society.²

An analysis of U.S.-led post-conflict infrastructure reconstruction efforts since World War II – including Germany and Japan after the war, but also more contemporary examples of Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan – reveals six criteria that indicate how successful the reconstruction efforts will be. The presence of a functioning government and an acceptable level of security are the two most important indicators of success. These two criteria are complemented by the pre-war level of development, the level and type of wartime destruction, the local construction capacity and capability, and the human dimension. When factored into reconstruction planning and execution, these criteria can be used to evaluate how successful reconstruction efforts might be and to gauge the length of commitment and amount of resources that might be required.

Background

The frequency of U.S. interventions has increased since the end of the Cold War. The United States has led reconstruction efforts in seven countries since 1994: Somalia, Liberia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq.³ The U.S. and its allies have struggled in achieving post-conflict reconstruction success and cementing long term strategic gains in all of these conflicts.

Due to lessons learned in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. government and the Department of Defense (DOD) enacted several directives to resolve shortcomings in military planning and execution during stability operations. The first of these, National Security Presidential Directive 44, outlined general roles and responsibilities for reconstruction and directed the Department of State and the Department of Defense to integrate stability and reconstruction plans into military operations.⁴ In response, the Secretary of Defense signed Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 3000.05, Stability Operations, in 2005. This directive not only provided the U.S. military with the mission to conduct stability operations, but gave this mission a priority comparable to combat operations. DODD 3000.05 established the role for the military to work with the U.S. interagency and foreign institutions in a post-conflict or crisis situation and directed the Department of Defense to have the capability to conduct a wide range of reconstruction activities to support stability operations.⁵

Part of any stability operation is consideration of infrastructure reconstruction and what level of effort is required to match U.S. strategic goals and policy. In recently-published U.S. Army doctrine, the reconstruction effort (as part of stability operations) is considered a significant part of combat operations and is required for a successful counterinsurgency strategy.⁶ Infrastructure reconstruction can demonstrate long term

commitment, provide much needed jobs, and help jump start an economy negatively affected by war. Reconstruction time and money can also be wasted and can result in negative strategic effects if not applied correctly. A post-conflict government often does not have the necessary bureaucracy to absorb the influx of foreign aid, resulting in “too much too soon.” Local capacity also can be a problem, with foreign companies making much of the profit due to a local lack of supplies, expertise, and equipment.⁷ Will of the people and their desire to support reconstruction must also be considered. These factors and others, derived from historical case studies, form the basis for these six criteria.

Case Studies and Analysis Leading to the Criteria

The case studies used for this project are based on the analysis of several post-World War II U.S.-led post conflict interventions. Current U.S Army doctrine, U.S. government policies and reports, and lessons learned from both governmental and nongovernmental organizations were considered in the establishment of the criteria. Current literature on infrastructure reconstruction and stability operations were also examined as much has been published in the past decade, specifically on Iraq and Afghanistan.

For case studies, post-war Europe, particularly Germany, was examined, focusing on both pre-Marshall Plan reconstruction and post-Marshall Plan lessons learned. The Marshall Plan, a success story for Western Europe, is referenced and used as a bench mark for successful reconstruction efforts by many in the U.S. What is often not understood is the amount of money and U.S. political will that went into assisting the European nations devastated by WW II.⁸ Such an effort, although admirable, is likely not repeatable. The Marshall Plan combined political and economic

reconstruction while enabling the seventeen beneficiary countries to make macroeconomic changes that had positive impacts for decades.⁹ This obligation to shared growth was accomplished through great cost and commitment of all nations involved, particularly the U.S.¹⁰ There are some valid lessons to be learned despite the small probability of such a future commitment. Germany was a modern industrialized country before the war with largely homogeneous population. Devastation to infrastructure and to the population was severe, requiring major allied reconstruction effort and an accompanying commitment of resources.

Japan, as a case study, is unique in that it was exclusively a U.S.-planned and -executed reconstruction effort, whereas the other WW II and following post-conflict reconstructions were U.S.-led coalition efforts. There are several similarities between Germany's and Japan's reconstruction, despite the preponderance of U.S aid going to the Marshall Plan. Japan, with severe devastation, had a willing homogeneous population, secure environment and massive U.S. aid.

The U.S. intervention in Somalia, along with concurrent U.N. operations, was relatively brief but showcases stability operations in a failing state where strategic objectives were poorly understood or articulated. Several thousand Somalis were saved in the short term by food assistance as the U.N. and aid agencies attempted to stabilize the country. The mission of the United States and its coalition partners expanded from a humanitarian aid mission to security operations, resulting in failure of both missions and contributing to a failing state in Somalia.¹¹ Factors influencing the failure of the reconstruction effort in Somalia were limited government capacity, an unsecure

environment, a fragmented society and extremely limited local capacity to rebuild infrastructure.

Bosnia as a case study is unique in that it is a country that suffered a massive civil war and widespread destruction. The amount of aid and infrastructure investment by European countries was considerably high, but Bosnia remains beset with corruption and has become a welfare state within Europe.¹² Bosnia, despite having a relatively secure environment and massive aid influx, suffers from a weak and corrupt government and ethnic divisions among the population that have hindered advancement of national systems.

Kosovo is similar to Bosnia in several ways, having suffered devastation in 1998 and 1999 leading into the NATO air campaign. It is special in that it remains a province of Serbia, although a U.N. protectorate, complicating the ability for its government to function both domestically and internationally.¹³ Kosovo in many ways should be the model for stability operations, with many shared characteristics of post-war Germany and Japan. These include a somewhat functioning government, a relatively secure operating environment and a substantial U.S. and European aid effort. Kosovo, although one of the more successful infrastructure reconstruction efforts studied, is still plagued with issues relating to the absence of a U.N. resolution on self rule.¹⁴

Haiti - as a case study - represents a failing state with a U.S. timetable that led to a withdrawal (and subsequent collapse of the government) after two years. Haiti makes the case for a need for a functioning government representative of the people. Infrastructure improvements, to include attempts to privatize utilities, were in progress

but did not last and much U.S. and international effort was wasted.¹⁵ Haiti's failures stem from a weak corrupt government and a very low level of pre-war development.

Reconstruction in Iraq after the U.S. invasion in 2003 represents a host of infrastructure building problems, but also some success stories. Despite a large influx of U.S. aid and troops, there was an overall lack of security due to an insurgency and sectarian violence which severely undercut reconstruction efforts. Only after six years of effort, billions of dollars of infrastructure development (much wasted), and a recommitment to Iraqi security by the U.S. through the "surge" did the U.S. and Iraq begin to stabilize the situation.¹⁶ Positive factors in reconstruction for Iraq were a moderately-developed country with a functioning central government with local construction capability. Hindrances were infrastructure devastated by several wars and years of sanctions, a sectarian divide between three major factions, and an insecure environment as a result of an insurgency and budding civil war.

Afghanistan holds some similarities to Iraq in that it also is fighting an insurgency while trying to rebuild the country. The differences include a traditionally weak central government, extremely underdeveloped and poor rural areas, and a very ethnically-diverse population with hundreds of tribes and sub-tribes.¹⁷

Planning Criteria

The six criteria were developed from common trends, both positive and negative, from the historical case studies. The criteria are all linked in one form or another; an example is seen in how the presence of a functioning government helps enable security essential for infrastructure reconstruction. Several of the successful reconstruction efforts have shared similarities in reconstruction. While it is difficult to single out one particular criterion as overriding, the presence of a functioning government and security

are two dominant factors in reconstruction. Neither one by itself, however, can overcome deficiencies in the other. A semi-functioning post-war government in Iraq still had monumental problems with reconstruction due to lack of security. Haiti, secured by U.S. and U.N. troops, had a dysfunctional government preventing any long-term reconstruction efforts. Haiti's weak transitional government was unable to provide for a functioning police and military, leaving the government unable to sustain a stable security situation ten years after the U.S. pullout.¹⁸ An occupying force can compensate somewhat, at least temporarily, for the absence of security and a functioning government by providing the host country with security and/or forming a provisional government, such as the United States did in post-war Japan.¹⁹

The other four criteria, while important, cannot significantly influence the reconstruction effort to the point where security or a functioning government is not required. These four criteria do significantly set the stage for several requirements, to include length of time required for the reconstruction effort, overall scope of reconstruction activities, and expectations of the people (host nation, U.S. population, and world). They are an important factor in the feasibility of any effort. Without a full understanding of the scope of the effort, the U.S. government could risk an open-ended commitment or a self-imposed timetable, either of which may result ultimately in strategic failure.

Presence of a Functioning Government and Government Capacity

After World War II, the U.S. and its allies invested in both the physical and governmental reconstruction of Japan and Germany, encouraging the formation of democratic institutions and the creation of responsible bureaucracies in both nations. Both nations had the benefit of having had functioning central bureaucracies in the past,

even if they had not been fully democratic. This effort helped transform the economies to sustain their nations and promote economic stability and growth.²⁰ Both countries were able slowly to assume governmental responsibilities and take over reconstruction responsibilities over time from the occupying powers.

Somalia as a failed state is a particularly difficult country in which to conduct stability operations and attempt infrastructure reconstruction. During U.S.-led stabilization efforts, only local attempts at reconstruction were made since there was no functioning centralized government. These efforts did not last and were ultimately unsuccessful.²¹ Without governmental systems in place, little progress can be made despite investment of resources. One of the early first steps in a case like Somalia should be the investment in establishing some form of government capacity. United States Army Field Manual FM 3-07 *Stability Operations* lists “establish civil control” as an essential task during reconstruction operations. Helping establish even a preliminary government is the first step in enabling the host government to begin restoring essential services.²² Building this governmental capacity also enables the rule of law, which is linked to security and reconstruction programs.

Programs for reconstruction cannot be successful under a grossly ineffective government, as was the case with Haiti. After the U.S. pullout from Haiti, the progress to restore essential services and privatize utilities collapsed. The Haitian government was too ineffective to continue the reconstruction and reform initiatives despite two years of U.S. and international investment.²³ Additionally, these types of large programs, such as nationwide utility privatization in Haiti, should not be started until the government has the capacity to function in a sustained and effective way.²⁴

A functioning bureaucracy allows the host nation adequately to account for and process funding for infrastructure construction, repair and maintenance. This increases the likelihood of reconstruction funding being used properly in concert with existing institutions, both private and governmental, within the country.²⁵ Without this system in place, reconstruction efforts can be wasted due to a lack of commitment to staffing or maintaining the facilities.

A common factor among post-conflict governments is they are usually very weak due to a collapse of the former regime. This weak institutional environment often precludes governmental systems needed to facilitate the rapid flow of incoming aid. Funds tend to be most plentiful immediately following hostilities, when a government has fewer institutional systems in place.²⁶ These funds and fund pledges can come from a variety of sources and are often fueled by an international community that is seeking to participate in the process. Unfortunately, these funds tend to be strongest in the direct aftermath of the conflict where they may not be fully expended due to limited governmental capacity and tend to thin out over time when governmental capacity grows to meet reconstruction demands and host nation population expectations.²⁷ While military planners may understand that governments are built over time, the functions of the government, especially support to reconstruction, are difficult to plan accurately until governmental capacity is assessed.

Host nation governmental agencies must be brought into the infrastructure planning and development as early as possible during reconstruction. Even if the capacity is not fully established, local governments should be used as much as possible to reestablish services and infrastructure. Over-reliance on external agencies or

governments may have negative impacts on the population's support of the government.²⁸

Working around and not through existing governments is often detrimental to progress. There is often a temptation by occupying nations to bypass struggling governments in an attempt to speed reconstruction. This solution rarely works and often is at cross purposes to strategic goals and end state.

In May 2009, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) replaced the head of operations in Afghanistan as part of the civilian surge of governmental support to the country as outlined by President Obama. The USAID mission director for Afghanistan in 2010 acknowledged the widespread waste and failure of reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan since operations began in 2001. His plan to reconnect the USAID programs with the Afghanistan government is to raise the 2009 rate of only 5% of funds going to the Afghan government to up to 40% being allocated to agencies such as the Ministry of Health.²⁹ This commitment to work with the bureaucratic systems of the government in Kabul can help strengthen the central government as long it is done responsibly and with transparency.

Security

Reconstruction is extremely difficult to accomplish on any large scale when an appropriate security level does not exist. According to the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), the prevailing reason for project failure during reconstruction efforts in Iraq from 2003 to 2008 was due to a lack of security.³⁰ A level of basic security must be in place to overcome threats to the infrastructure being rebuilt and to the maintainers and operators of those facilities. This security must be seen by

the local population as protecting them and allowing the infrastructure to function normally.³¹

Lack of security greatly complicates stability operations as a whole, impacting not only infrastructure, but plans for democratization as well. The deteriorating security condition in Iraq in mid-2003 was a major factor among many in preventing the reconstruction effort of Paul Bremer, Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority, from getting much beyond the planning phase. As security conditions in Iraq worsened, construction contractors and governmental officials were being kidnapped and killed, preventing any meaningful post-war reconstruction.³²

Forging ahead with reconstruction projects, despite a lack of security, can have major adverse effects on achieving objectives. A lesson learned by SIGIR in Iraq is that “endlessly rebuilding in the wake of sustained attacks on reconstruction personnel and critical infrastructure proved to be a demoralizing and wasteful proposition.”³³

Reconstruction and development do not guarantee security. Building with a goal to provide or enable security does not always work.³⁴ Security and reconstruction are somewhat symbiotic. When adequate security conditions are set during stability operations, infrastructure reconstruction is much more effective. By 2005, the reconstruction program in Iraq had not achieved its goals of providing a modern infrastructure on which to base an economic recovery; nor did it have a measurable effect on reducing sectarian violence or attacks on coalition forces.³⁵

Prewar Level of Development

The prewar level of development of a country must be factored into planning reconstruction efforts. Before WWII, Europe had a strong infrastructure with well-engineered roads, bridges and railways, especially in Germany.³⁶ This fact facilitated

rapid repair; indeed, most of the infrastructure repair took place before 1946, and before the Marshall Plan was implemented.³⁷ In many other post-conflict environments, weak or failed states do not have the capacity to provide even basic essential services to the population.³⁸ Reconstruction in such an environment will often require long time periods and more effort overall.

An assessment must be made as to whether the “reconstruction” effort is actually more of a “construction” effort. Many Third World countries do not have the necessary infrastructure to allow a comprehensive approach to post-conflict nation building, requiring a strategic decision to be made as to the potential value of the attempt.³⁹ Such construction projects, while sometimes necessary, can often lead to extreme costs. The construction of the ring road in Afghanistan is an example of a necessary construction project assessed as having strategic importance. The ring road costs were \$123,000 to \$589,000 per kilometer of road constructed, with certain sections up to \$2,400,000 per kilometer.⁴⁰ Costs and length of time to construct these types of projects must be factored into planning or they can result in waste and poor oversight due to rushed implementation of plans.

Unfortunately, high visibility and high cost projects do not always result in a satisfactory solution. The Afghanistan ring road, despite its high costs, may have to be rebuilt only a few years after construction due to deficient construction standards and poor maintenance plans.⁴¹ Will this effort ultimately be seen as a waste of U.S. taxpayer dollars or by the Afghan people as a fallacy? Any construction – especially first time construction, such as the ring road – must be done to a standard that is acceptable to the host nation and its people.

Pre-war economic development must be evaluated since some countries without a solid macroeconomic base will take significantly more effort to rebuild.⁴² Pre-war economic sanctions in Iraq in the 1990s, or Soviet-style economies in Bosnia prior to the civil war, can be just as much a factor in devastation as physical destruction during combat.⁴³ Time must be factored in during reconstruction to allow for standing up a functioning economy which is linked to establishing overall government capacity. Infrastructure systems put in place without an economy providing adequate revenue to a government will likely not last. If international funding to reconstruction is substituted for host nation economic capacity, the long term outcome is often not positive.

Iraq, suffering devastation from the Gulf War in 1991 and economic sanctions throughout the 1990s, went from a moderately wealthy middle income country to an impoverished country with 60% of its population dependent on government food rations. Infrastructure suffered and continued to break down as the Iraq economy deteriorated.⁴⁴

In Bosnia, the U.S. and European allies heavily financed the reconstruction and the transition from a state-run to a market-based economy. Because the government had little expertise in running a market economy or managing large sums of money, only 20% of foreign aid dollars went through Bosnian government institutions.⁴⁵ The international financing of reconstruction created a surge in projects with most money being funneled outside of governmental controls and regulation. This process led to widespread corruption and created weak local institutions. In 2007, ten years after the war ended, Bosnia was still dependent on international funding, and more of its citizens were below the poverty level than in prewar 1990.⁴⁶

Following WWII, the Marshall plan provided reconstruction funds not only to rebuilding infrastructure, but also to the economy that fueled the resources needed to maintain and expand the infrastructure. Germany's economy, although devastated by war, was restarted through Marshall funding driving the reconstruction engine.⁴⁷

Historical maintenance and repair capability of existing infrastructure is a factor in rebuilding. Older infrastructure needs more repairs and often requires a larger maintenance budget. A weak state may not be adequately funding needed repairs even if the basic infrastructure was modern. In Iraq in 2003, a sewage pumping station in Baghdad was inoperative, resulting in raw waste being dumped into the river. The pumps in the station had been frozen for over ten years and never repaired by the Iraqi government.⁴⁸

While the pre-war level of development is a factor that can hardly be influenced, it is ultimately very important to consider in planning the amount of time and reconstruction effort. As seen by the reconstruction case studies, it is not a show stopper but does factor heavily into the process.

Level of Wartime Destruction and type of Destruction

The amount of destruction wrought through war and the type of destruction are important factors impacting infrastructure reconstruction. A nation that suffers severe devastation requires significantly more effort to rebuild than one that has had minimal destruction. This factor could easily translate into multiple years and an increase in billions of dollars of effort. Bosnia is a good example of a European country that, despite a moderate level of prewar development, was slow to rebuild due to massive destruction brought about by civil war. Nearly one million land mines and 250,000

civilians killed (mostly men) drastically hampered efforts to get reconstruction started, especially in agriculture.⁴⁹

German and Italian cities and associated infrastructure suffered extensive damage in WWII due to Allied bombing, as well as heavy combat in several major cities, such as Berlin. This totality of destruction was addressed through massive reconstruction efforts in the Marshall Plan and other aid resulting in infrastructure reconstruction proceeding rather quickly given the scale of destruction.⁵⁰

Not only the scope of damage, but also the type of infrastructure damaged must be taken into consideration. Destruction of critical infrastructure, such as power plants and transportation networks, makes reconstruction more costly and requires more of a long-term commitment. Advances in precision munitions make key infrastructure easier to hit and more lucrative targets as they often directly impact operational command and control. Targeting infrastructure may also be seen as a way for planners to affect and coerce a state while avoiding or reducing civilian casualties.⁵¹ This tradeoff must be considered: deliberate targeting of infrastructure may require significantly more resources and force the United States or host nation to make a longer commitment to stability operations after the fighting ends.

Local Construction Capability and Capacity

Local construction capability and capacity must be given consideration during reconstruction efforts. Ideally, local capability is used to the maximum extent possible to put money back into the local economy and put people to work. In post-war Kosovo, there was limited capacity of local contractors to do the work needed for reconstruction. Capacity was not present - nor was time allowed - for the development of significant construction capacity. This caused many governmental and nongovernmental aid

organizations to hire international firms, resulting in a cash outflow and local resentment.⁵²

Limiting the size and number of projects is a way to match construction capacity more closely with infrastructure repair. Too much aid effort too soon often overwhelms tenuous post-war governments and may even worsen corruption.⁵³ Many post-war reconstruction plans focus on large-scale infrastructure projects, often overlooking smaller, rapidly-completed projects or repair and maintenance of existing systems.⁵⁴ Army Field Manual 3-07 *Stability Operations* succinctly addresses complex reconstruction projects: “Large-scale projects that require complicated host-nation efforts to sustain should not be initiated until the necessary infrastructure is in place to support such effort.”⁵⁵ Planning should be made for fewer, smaller projects that can be completed in a short time span when construction capacity is limited.⁵⁶

Large-scale reconstruction projects can easily outstrip local capacity and have negative effects on the population if a systems approach is not used. Some large water supply projects in Afghanistan, put in by agencies such as USAID, fall into this category. These large supply lines were constructed but never got connected to local residents due to inadequate local infrastructure. Sections of the population see the improvements being made, but are cut out of the benefits.⁵⁷

Some positive examples can be found through the use of the Local Governance Program (LGP) in Iraq in 2003. Following wide-spread looting that destroyed much of the infrastructure and degraded the local electrical capacity in al-Basrah, the LGP partnered with the local electrical department to assess needs and provide emergency funding for repairs. The use of local expertise was emphasized and security was

provided by community residents who volunteered to protect the repairs. This success of small-scale immediate solutions supported by local institutions and supported by the people was used as a model in other areas of Iraq.⁵⁸

The Department of State Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) lists public-private partnerships as an essential element in sustaining economic growth and promoting stabilization.⁵⁹ These partnerships can be very effective in areas where many small projects are needed and the host nation government does not have the full capacity for reconstruction. This is especially true in areas that are very unstable, where large-scale, government-driven projects are likely to fail.⁶⁰

The Human Dimension: Will of the People, Cultural Norms, and Societal Expectations

The human element plays strongly into reconstruction and underpins stability operations, but it is not covered well in current U.S. Department of Defense doctrine. Other than a few short passages on “cultural awareness,” FM 3-07, *Stability Operations*, barely mentions people as having an influence on reconstruction. Even though “humanitarian and social well being” is listed in the Department of State S/CRS task list, this is not expounded on nor emphasis given in FM 3-07. Consideration of the human element is not included in the five general stability tasks for the U.S. Army.⁶¹ The obvious danger is that a reconstruction effort may try to forge ahead despite limited consideration and understanding of the human element.

A will to proceed and move forward as a nation has a strong impact in reconstruction. Strong national unity among the occupied Germans and Japanese after WWII expedited governmental changes and the rebuilding of national infrastructure. Conversely, ethnic conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have seriously impacted coalition rebuilding efforts.⁶² Conflicts in these two latter examples have not only had the obvious

impact on decreased security levels but have led to strife and friction in the rebuilding effort.

It is essential to understand culture and religion when conducting stability operations and infrastructure reconstruction. For example, African and Arab states, in general, often stress religious values and tribal bonds.⁶³ Governments with strong religious and cultural views may place a higher priority on some projects than others. This can lead to friction if local views and norms are not balanced with essential services. Understanding the local context of historical, economic, cultural, and religious considerations is required for successful host nation ownership and capacity building.⁶⁴ These informal norms or “social capital” of a country are important to long-term success during reconstruction. The social capital is often eroded or strained in a country that has suffered conflict. Building projects and reconstructing infrastructure can serve as catalysts requiring individuals to work together for the greater good of the population. Community Development Councils in Afghanistan have been used in some parts of the country to help villages pool resources to work on larger projects, such as bridges. Getting people who have been through periods of conflict to work together help restores social capital.⁶⁵

Western ideas of economic development and progress may conflict sharply with local customs and societal norms.⁶⁶ Balancing what is needed with what is acceptable to the local customs and religions will reduce friction and may be necessary. This is especially true if some reconstruction is seen as necessary by the U.S. to provide for social well being, despite the fact it may conflict with local customs and beliefs.

Reconstruction assistance must be tailored to prevent dishonoring local beliefs with even fundamental requirements, such as food, health, shelter, and water.⁶⁷

Expectations must be framed to match U.S. goals and interests during reconstruction. The amount of reconstruction and construction must be established and communicated to the public. Establishing public expectation is essential in furthering the will of the people to work to improve their country and for critical public support in the United States.⁶⁸ In Afghanistan, most of the public services are in the urban areas, with little development in the countryside. These lack of services can further the rural population's view that the central government cannot or will not provide for their basic needs, reducing the rural population's trust in the government.⁶⁹ These expectations must be addressed or segments of a population may be further disenfranchised with a U.S.-supported government.

A "time lag" between expectations and reconstruction can adversely affect the will of the people, resulting in loss of support for the reconstruction effort. In Iraq, the public often expected faster and better results than was delivered by coalition forces; frequently the Iraqis expected even more than the coalition forces had the capability or capacity to do. Electricity in Iraq, often promised by coalition leadership to improve by 2004, was slow to recover to even pre-2003 levels. By November 2009, only 5,710 Megawatts were being delivered to meet a national demand of 8,500 to 9,000 Megawatts. Pre-war electricity capacity in Baghdad was 2,500 Megawatts, with residents of Baghdad getting between 16 and 24 hours of electricity a day. Even though there was a modest increase in capacity nationwide by 2009, residents of Baghdad in September of 2009 were only getting 15.6 hours of electricity per day - still below pre-

war levels and over six years after coalition forces began reconstruction and stability operations.⁷⁰ This expectation was further convoluted by a pre-war policy of prioritizing the supply of electricity to Baghdad. Millions of Baghdad residents, used to getting at least 16 hours of electricity under Saddam Hussein, were disenchanted with post-war coalition policies of equitable electricity distribution throughout Iraq.⁷¹

In Afghanistan, expectations have been changed by physical improvements in urban areas, leading to a more modern economy and consumer appetite. Expectations were raised as outside media sources, particularly television and the internet, showcased a modern world, increasing demand for a better standard of living for urban Afghans. This resulted in conservative forces in the Afghan government attempting to place limits on programming on the national networks.⁷² Clearly, expectations must be managed for not only what will be improved, but how long it will take to effect change. As seen in the cases in Afghanistan, expectations can change and often rise, requiring good strategic communication and dialogue by the government. The potential loss of the will of the people due to unmet expectations is a huge risk that cuts across all aspects of stability operations.

Conclusion

Despite multiple attempts at nation building and stability operations, the U.S. still continues to struggle in understanding the amount of effort required to conduct reconstruction operations and the factors that ultimately make reconstruction successful. Even after nine years of stability operations and infrastructure reconstruction, the overall effort in Afghanistan is plagued with many of the same problems as other conflicts. In January 2010, the State Department issued the Afghanistan and Pakistan Regional Stabilization Strategy that not only supports the

increase of U.S. and NATO forces but also fundamentally revises the reconstruction effort. Most of these changes to the strategy are lessons relearned - such as a planned funding increase from 4% to 40% of reconstruction funds channeled through the Afghan government.⁷³ This concept of working “through the government” and not around was learned in Germany and Japan after World War II and relearned in modern conflicts such as Iraq.⁷⁴ Without a thorough understanding of the strategic context of reconstruction, U.S. planners will continue to struggle with viable goals and place U.S. strategic interests at risk.

These strategic planning criteria should be used by planners as a way to help devise ways to meet the larger strategic ends in a conflict and to ensure that adequate means are available. Overly optimistic end state estimates are detrimental to U.S. strategic interests. Ways and means that are not matched with a specific end state may have wasteful or even detrimental effects on strategic interest. Only by understanding the factors that help make reconstruction efforts feasible will policy planners and military officers be able accurately to envision and articulate a realistic end state based on feasible ways and means for reconstruction operations.

Endnotes

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